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Relationships between Parenting Styles, Severity of Punishment, Importance of Religion in Child Development and Childhood Social Behaviors in Caribbean Immigrant Families

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Abstract

Using cultural ecological, parenting frameworks, and immigrant adjustment perspectives as a guide, this study explored the relationship between parenting style, severity of punishment, parental assessment of the importance of religion in child development, and children's social behaviors among Caribbean immigrant families in the US. The sample consisted of 57 mother-father pairs who had a pre-kindergarten or kindergarten-age child. Parents provided assessments of their parenting styles using the Parental Authority Questionnaire and answered two Likert-type questions about parental importance of religion in child development, and severity of punishment. They also provided assessments of their children's social skills. Paired sample t-test indicated that there were no significant differences between mothers' and fathers' assessments of parenting styles, severity of punishment, views on the importance of religion in childhood development, or children's social behaviors. Multiple regression analysis indicated that fathers' authoritative parenting style, severity of punishment, and parental ideas about the importance of religion in childhood development were all significantly associated with children's social behaviors. Data are discussed in terms of the importance of fathers' parenting practices and beliefs and childhood social skills in immigrant families.

Relationships between Parenting Styles, Severity of Punishment, Importance of Religion

in Child Development and Childhood Social Behaviors in

Caribbean Immigrant Families

By

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the last two decades there has been growing interest in the determinants of childhood social behaviors across cultural and ethnic groups (see Creveling, Valera, Weems, & Corey, 2010; Javo, Ronning, Heyerdahl, & Rudmin, 2004; Rudy & Grusec 2006; Sorkhabi, 2005; Wang, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007). Because there is agreement that early childhood problem behaviors show continuity into the later childhood and adolescent years, researchers have examined intrafamilial and extrafamilial factors and social-psychological processes that may contribute to childhood social adjustment. In particular, authoritative parenting and religious and ethnic socialization have been identified as protective factors against risks for childhood difficulties (see Dwairy, 2010; Gershoff, 2002; McLoyd & Smith, 2002; Sim & Ong, 2005). However, efforts to link parenting practices to childhood outcomes have largely been confined to families in North American and Europe. Little is known about the possible factors that may be linked to childhood difficulties in Caribbean immigrant families, one of the growing immigrant populations in the United States. The current study explored the relationships between parenting styles, parents' use of physical discipline, and parents` ideas about the importance of religion in childhood development and children's social behaviors among Caribbean immigrants in the US.

In this chapter, I first provide a review of literature on general parenting practices from a cross-cultural perspective that broadly covers the relationship between Baumrind`s parenting typology, physical discipline, and parental religiousness, and child outcomes. Next, I focus on the links between parenting styles and practices and

childhood outcomes among Caribbean families. Synthesizing the literature in the three

domains noted above assisted in framing the following research questions for this study:

(a) Are there differences between mothers' and fathers' reports of parenting styles,

severity of punishment, perception of religion in childhood development, and childhood

social behaviors among Caribbean immigrant families? (b) What is the relationship

between parenting style, parental assessment of the importance of religion in childhood

development, and parental physical discipline and childhood social behaviors among

Caribbean immigrant families in the U.S?

General Parenting Styles and Practices and Links to Childhood Outcomes

Parenting Styles and Childhood Outcomes

Baumrind (1967) developed the most commonly used approach to assessing

parenting styles. Her parenting typologies (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive)

have been used to assess parenting styles in several cultural communities across the

world (Cheah, Leung, Tahseen, & Schultz, 2009; Dwairy & Achoui, 2006; Halgunseth,

Ispa, & Rudy, 2006; Su & Hynie, 2011; Yaman, Mesman, van IJzendoorn, &

Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010). Baumrind`s work is important to the current study

because her approach has guided much of the conceptualization of the link between

parenting and child outcomes. Thus, a summary of her approach is provided below.

However, because there have been important challenges to her parenting framework (see

Chao, 1994; Roopnarine Krishankumar, Narine, Logie, & Lape, in press), such critiques

will also be addressed in ways that inform the direction taken in the current analysis.

Generally, authoritarian parenting is defined by high control and low warmth,

whereas authoritative parenting reflects high levels of warmth and emotional support

within a more democratic context of parenting (Baumrind, 1967). At different levels, parental warmth is associated with positive social and cognitive outcomes in children and adolescents (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000; Jackson-Newsom, Buchanan, & McDonald, 2008; Wang, Chen, Chen, Cui & Li, 2006). Further, appropriate responsiveness that is characteristic of the authoritative style of parenting is positively associated with effortful control in the preschool years (Karreman, van Tuijl, van Akenm, & Denkovic, 2008) and to the development of self-regulation in early childhood (Jennings et al., 2008). In contrast, maternal control is associated with behavioral difficulties in children (Creveling, et al., 2010). For instance, among Finnish mothers high levels of psychological control with high affection are positively associated with internal and external problem behaviors in kindergartners, while maternal affection had no effect on children's internal and external problems when combined with low levels of psychological control (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005).

Although there is general consensus that authoritative parenting is most beneficial for the promotion of children's social and intellectual skills in European-heritage cultures, some have argued that Baumrind's parenting constructs may not be valid for the assessment of parenting styles in other cultural groups (see Ho, Bluestein, & Jenkins, 2008; Wang, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007). Moreover, some researchers have found that the authoritative parenting style is not linked to the same outcomes in different ethnic groups in the United States (Chao, 2001, Creveling et al., 2010). Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) in their assessment of authoritative parenting, parental involvement in schooling, parental encouragement to succeed, and academic outcomes in a sample of 6400 American adolescents found that authoritative parenting was associated

with beneficial outcomes and authoritarian parenting was negatively associated with child behavior problems in European Americans but not in Asian Americans and African Americans. These findings support the notion that Baumrind's parental typologies might be more applicable for European American adolescents than those in other ethnic groups.

Perhaps one of the most serious challenges to the cultural validity of Baumrind's parenting typologies came from studies conducted on Chinese immigrants. In an experimental demonstration of this idea, Chao (2001) examined the effects of parenting style on school performance to determine whether authoritative parenting would have beneficial effects for European Americans only and whether these effects differed across ethnic groups. In a sample of 324 first- and second- generation Chinese Americans and 208 third-generation European American high school students, results indicated that European Americans and second generation Chinese Americans who had authoritative parents performed better than their counterparts who had authoritarian parents (Chao, 2001). Again, it appears that authoritative parenting has more beneficial influences on European Americans and second generation Chinese Americans, and that authoritarian parenting has more positive influences on first generation Chinese Americans.

Consistent with previous research, Wang et al. `s (2007) longitudinal study examined the relationship between parental control and child emotional and academic functioning in a sample of 806 American and Chinese seventh-grade students in the United States and China. The findings illustrated that parental psychological control was associated with American but not Chinese children`s decreased learning strategies, and parent`s behavioral control was related to American but not Chinese children`s increased emotional well-being. In another study, Creveling et al. (2010) examined the role of

ethnicity in moderating the relationship between controlling parenting, negative cognitive styles, and children`s anxiety in a sample of 427 African American, European American, and Latin American 9- to 15-year-old children. Perceived maternal control was associated with impaired autonomy/performance for all groups; however, maternal control was not related to disconnection/rejection for African American children. Creveling et al. (2010) suggested that ethnicity moderated the effect of controlling parenting on the negative cognitive style disconnection/rejection because maternal control was more normative for ethnic minorities.

In related work, Javo, et al. (2004) demonstrated that child behavior problems were related to lower levels of parental acceptance accompanied by higher levels of physical punishment in two main ethnic groups in Norway. In addition, lower maternal age and single parenting were associated with more behavioral problems, and girls were more influenced by childrearing factors such as parenting styles of restrictiveness and permissiveness, parenting cuddling, and physical punishment than were boys (Javo et al., 2004). In the same vein, Dwairy`s (2010) cross-cultural study that involved a sample of 2884 Arab, Indian, French, Polish and Argentinean adolescents revealed gender differences in parental acceptance- rejection as well. Dwairy (2010) found that fathers were more rejecting and less accepting than mothers, while male adolescents were more likely to be rejected and less likely to be accepted than female adolescents. Finally, it was found that parental rejection was more prevalent among parents with little education and a low family socioeconomic level. These latter findings indicate that demographic variables play an important role in determining the relationship between specific parent behaviors and child outcomes across cultures and ethnicities (see Putnick et al., 2012).

Physical Punishment

Physical punishment is one parental practice that is associated with undesirable child outcomes such as child externalizing and internalizing problem behavior and poor school performance. Some protective factors such as emotional support or perceived normativeness of physical punishment have been shown to moderate the relationships between physical discipline and child behaviors and experiences. Nonetheless, physical discipline is still linked to increasing child problem behaviors (Gershoff, 2002). For example, in their cross-national sample of 366 mothers and children from China, India, Italy, Kenya, the Philippines, and Thailand, Lansford et al. (2005) examined the relationship between physical discipline and children`s adjustment. They indicated that children`s and mothers` perceptions of cultural normativeness of physical discipline moderated the links between experiencing physical discipline and child aggression and anxiety. But the frequency of experiencing physical discipline was positively associated with anxiety and aggression regardless of whether physical discipline was perceived as normative (Lansford et al, 2005).

McKee et al. (2007) also examined the frequency and the severity of experiencing physical discipline in a sample of 2,582 European American parents in the U.S. They found that boys received more harsh verbal and harsh physical discipline than girls, and that fathers used harsher physical discipline with boys than mothers. Although parental warmth did not moderate the relationship between harsh discipline and child internalizing and externalizing problems, mothers` harsh physical discipline was associated with child internalizing problems, and mothers' harsh physical and verbal discipline were associated with children`s externalizing problems beyond positive parenting such as warmth and

appropriate discipline. Likewise, fathers` harsh verbal and physical discipline was related to child externalizing problems beyond positive parenting and internalizing problems. These findings suggest that the harshness of parental physical discipline may affect the intensity of child internalizing or externalizing problem behavior regardless of cultural normativeness of perceived physical discipline.

There are two studies that have assessed differences between mothers` and fathers` use of physical discipline in relation to child outcomes. Sim and Ong (2005) examined whether authoritative control and rejection moderated the relationship between parental physical punishment and child aggression. Father caning was positively linked to aggression, regardless of child gender, whereas mother caning was associated with child aggression only at low rejection. Differential effects were evident when slapping was considered. Mother slapping was associated with sons` aggression, whereas father slapping was associated with daughter`s aggression only at low rejection. Gender of parent differences in punishment was also reported by Day, Peterson, and McCracken (1998).

Physical discipline and child outcome has been studied in ethnic and cultural groups across the United States to determine uniformity in effects. For instance, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, and Pettit (1996) found that the relationship between parents' use of physical discipline and children`s externalizing behavior problems was different for African American and European American children. Physical discipline was associated with higher externalizing scores only for European American children, a finding that supports the notion that the normativeness of physical discipline may affect child behavior. In contrast, Lorber, O`Leary and Slep (2011) who assessed racial/ethnic

differences in use of corporal punishment among African American, European American and Latin American parents failed to find any ethnic differences in terms of the relationship between corporal punishment and emotional factors or impulsivity.

A study by McLoyd and Smith (2002) also did not find ethnic differences on the effects of physical discipline. They examined the moderating effect of maternal emotional support on the relationship between physical discipline and behavior problems among European American, African American, and Hispanic American families. Results indicated that spanking predicted increases in problem behavior over a 6-year period after controlling for gender, income-to-need ratio, and maternal emotional support. There was no evidence that the relationship between spanking and behavior problems was related to race and ethnicity. Instead, the study demonstrates that maternal emotional support was buffering the relationship between spanking and children problem behavior (McLoyd & Smith, 2002).

Religion/Spirituality

Religious practices have been increasingly studied as a possible determinant of physical discipline but the majority of the studies are based on the comparison of Conservative Protestants and other religious groups (Ellison, Musick, & Holden, 2011; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993; Ellison, 1996; Ellison, Bartkowski, & Segal, 1996; Gershoff, Miller, & Holden, 1999). Gershoff, et al. (1999) stated that compared to other religious groups, Conservative Protestants use corporal punishment more often because they believed that corporal punishment is a part of effective parenting. To put it differently, Conservative Protestants consider corporal punishment as instrumentally effective parental behavior and they were more likely to believe that corporal punishment was not

associated with child problem behavior (Gershoff et al., 1999). Furthermore, Conservative Protestant parents are more likely to endorse corporal punishment compared to other religious groups because of the normative role of corporal punishment in childhood socialization.

Contrary to, Bartkowski (2000) who argued that Conservative Protestants were less likely to use parental yelling as a disciplinary practice compared to their non-conservative Protestant counterparts, Ellison (1996) found that Conservative Protestants were more likely to spank or slap their children compared to fundamentalist or evangelical groups. In their longitudinal data from a sample of 456 children, Ellison et al. (2011) found that maternal religiousness was associated with frequency of corporal punishment, while maternal religiousness moderated the relationship between corporal punishment at age 2-4 and emotional problems at age 7-10 (Ellison et al., 2011).

There are number of studies that have found associations between religious participation and parenting behaviors and values. In their longitudinal data from the Intergenerational Panel Study of Mothers and Children, Pearce and Axinn (1998) examined the relationship between family religious life and the quality of mother-child relations to demonstrate that mothers` participation in religious services was positively related to the mothers' view of the quality of the mother-child relationship. In a study of the link between mothers' religiosity and child adjustment among 136 African American, Caucasian American, and Hispanic American teenage mothers, Carothers, Borkowski, Lefever, and Whitman (2005) found that highly religious mothers tended to have greater self-esteem and that there was a negative association between mothers' level of religiosity and child aggression and delinquency after controlling for maternal

intelligence, SES, stress, and maternal support. The findings from these studies seem to indicate that religious beliefs and participation have implications for both mothers' and children's psychological well-being.

There are two studies specifically focused on the influence of fathers` religious participation and father-child relationship. Bartkowski and Xu (2000) studied the relationship between denominational affiliation, church attendance and theological conservatism, paternal supervision, affective fathering, and father-child interaction using data from the National Survey of Families and Household (1988). They found that fathers' church attendance was positively associated with paternal supervision. Similarly, using longitudinal data, Wilcox (2002) indicated that church attendance was positively related to fathers' involvement in youth-related activities. As was the case with mothers, these findings suggest that fathers' religious participation has beneficial effects on father-child relationship.

Letiecq (2007) investigated the role of spirituality in influencing parenting styles and practices among 61 low-income African American fathers and their preschool-aged children who lived in violent neighborhoods. Fathers who were more spiritual showed a tendency to use positive parenting strategies such as warmth and reasoning associated with the authoritative parenting style. In addition, highly spiritual fathers were more likely to use authoritative parenting with their sons, and both high and less spiritual fathers used similar parenting styles with their daughters.

In summary, these studies bring into question the applicability of Baumrind's parental typology in examining parenting styles in other cultural and ethnic groups. Specifically, the authoritative parenting style appears more beneficial, as far as child

outcomes are concerned, for European Americans than other cultural groups. At the same time, several studies have shown that authoritarian parenting does not always have negative outcomes in children across cultures. Furthermore, studies also show a strong link between parental use of physical discipline and child problem behaviors among different ethnic groups. There is a link between parental religious orientation and endorsement of corporal punishment, but religious beliefs and practices seem to have positive influences on parent-child relationship.

Parenting Styles and Practices among Caribbean and Caribbean Immigrant Families

Caribbean Families

As can be deduced from the above review, we are increasingly moving toward a pan-cultural understanding of the properties that constitute optimal parenting. Before we can achieve a better balance in the scientific integration process, more data are needed on parenting practices in the majority world. In this regard, we need data from different ecological niches that represent different parenting patterns. One such area is the Caribbean where parenting practices reflect a combination of warmth and indulgence and punitiveness -a pattern that may not fit into Baumrind's or Rohner's conceptual frameworks on parenting styles (Baumrind, 1967; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). In this segment, I provide an overview of research findings on Caribbean and Caribbean immigrant parenting practices and their possible implications for childhood development.

As stated already, Caribbean parenting can be characterized by a combination of warmth, indulgence and punitive disciplinary practices. Children are expected to be obedient, compliant, and respectful (Leo-Rhynie & Brown, 2013). The use of physical

and verbal modes of punishment are commonly employed by parents in responding to undesirable behaviors in children such as conflict with a sibling, talking back to parents or other adults, or coming home late from school (Brown & Johnson, 2008). Rule setting, rewarding, and praising are more common in middle- and upper-income families than in low-income families (Leo-Rhynie, 2006). Although the extant literature claims that Caribbean parents use more authoritarian parenting practices (Smith & Mosby, 2003; Brown & Johnson, 2008; Ricketts & Anderson, 2008), a cross-country analysis of parenting styles across four Caribbean nations (Lipps et al., 2012) suggested that the predominant parenting style was authoritative parenting (32.6%) and neglectful parenting (28.4%). The most prevalent parenting style was authoritative in Jamaica (%38.1), Bahamas (%38.2), and St. Kitts and Nevis (%32.7), whereas the most prevalent parenting style was neglectful in St.Vincent (%29.7), and in the other countries neglectful and permissive parenting was present in a sizeable number of families. In a sample of 139 lndo-Caribbean mothers in Guyana, and 180 African-Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean, and Mixed-ethnic mothers and fathers in Trinidad and Tobago, the predominant parenting style was characterized by high levels of parental warmth and low levels of parental control (64% of mothers in Guyana; 70% of mothers, 68.3% of fathers in Trinidad and Tobago) (Roopnarine et al., in press).

Roopnarine and his colleagues (Roopnarine et al., in press) also found mixed patterns of parenting practices in Trinidad and Tobago. In a sample of 460 African Caribbean, 362 Indo Caribbean and 460 Mixed-ethnic Caribbean families with 3-6 year old children, they examined the relationship between parenting practices, ethnic socialization and childhood behaviors. Parenting practices were assessed using the Ghent

Parental Behavior Scale and behavioral problems were assessed via the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Indo- and Mixed-ethnic Caribbean caregivers showed higher levels of positive behaviors, rule setting, and material rewarding compared to African Caribbean caregivers. African- and Mixed-ethnic Caribbean caregivers reported using more harsh discipline than Indo Caribbean caregivers. Further, positive parenting was associated with child prosocial behaviors across the three groups, whereas rule setting was associated with prosocial behavior only for Indo-Caribbean and Mixed-ethnic Caribbean families; harsh discipline was related to prosocial behavior for Mixed-ethnic Caribbean families only. Harsh discipline was related to behavioral difficulties for all three groups directly, whereas positive parenting was associated with behavioral difficulties only for Mixed-ethnic Caribbean families.

In a sample of 134 low-income Indo Caribbean mothers and their preschool aged children from Guyana, Roopnarine, Jin, and Krishnakumar (in press) examined whether maternal warmth moderated the relationship between harshness and justness of physical punishment, and preschoolers' prosocial behavior and anger. They utilized the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire, and Physical Punishment Questionnaire (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). Harshness of physical punishment was negatively associated with prosocial behavior for boys and girls. Maternal warmth moderated the relation between justness of physical discipline and prosocial behaviors for boys and anger for girls.

Rohner, Kean, and Cornoyer (1991) examined the link between physical punishment, perceived parental acceptance-rejection, cultural beliefs about physical punishment and children's psychological adjustment in a sample of 300 school-aged children from St. Kitts. They assessed whether physical punishment was negatively

associated with youth's psychological adjustment and whether perceived parental rejection mediated the association between physical punishment and youth maladjustment. It was found that parental use of physical punishment was negatively correlated with children's age, and the majority of youth agreed that "corporal punishment is a good and proper part of raising children" (p. 686). Caretaker rejection mediated the relationship between physical punishment and youth's negative psychological adjustment, but youths' beliefs about physical punishment was not associated with their psychological adjustment, directly or indirectly.

Another study by Steely and Rohner (2006) investigated the relationship between parental harshness and justness of physical punishment, perceived parental acceptance-rejection and psychological adjustment among 97 youths in Jamaica. The results showed that 97 % of youths were physically punished by their parents and youths generally perceived physical punishment as harsh and fairly unjust. Perceived parental harshness and perceived maternal rejection were related to youths' psychological maladjustment, but perceived justness of parental physical punishment was not associated with youths' psychological adjustment. Maternal harshness had an indirect effect on youths' negative psychological adjustment as mediated through maternal rejection which supports the findings from previous studies.

Smith, Springer, and Barrett (2011) also examined the association between physical discipline and socio-emotional adjustment in a sample of 563 Jamaican adolescents by assessing physical punishment, internalizing problems, behavior problems and self-esteem. Eighty percent of youths reported having received physical punishment and this did not vary by demographic variables. Perceived physical punishment was

associated with alcohol/drug use, suicide ideation, angry-irritable, depressed-anxious, and somatic complaints subscales of internalizing behavior. Higher levels of physical punishment was negatively associated with self-esteem, and positively associated with behavior problems such as antisocial or delinquent behaviors. Smith and Mosby (2003) stressed that the endorsement of physical punishment to control children's behavior leads to adjustment difficulties among children and adolescents.

Caribbean Immigrant Families

Despite the fact that there are over 3.7 million Caribbean immigrants in the United States (Acosta & la Cruz, 2011), research studies on parenting practices in Caribbean immigrants is almost nonexistent. This is surprising given that Caribbean immigration to the United States is not a new phenomenon. Recent census data indicate that most Caribbean immigrants originate from Cuba (29.6%), Dominican Republic (23.6 %), Haiti (15.7%), Jamaica (17.7%) and other Caribbean countries (13.4%) including Bahamas, Barbados, St. Kitts, and Trinidad and Tobago (Acosta & la Cruz, 2011). Of relevance to this study are the significant numbers of immigrants from the English-speaking countries. Several studies (Harwood, Yalcinkaya, Citlak, & Leyendecker, 2006; Leyendecker, Schoelmerich, & Citlak, 2006; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009) point to diverse adjustment patterns in families following immigration. These adjustment patterns may influence parenting practices and overall psychological adjustment of parents in a new cultural community. Additionally, it would be interesting to see if the patterns of parenting noted for families in the Caribbean persist among Caribbean immigrant families in the United States.

Two studies begin to address issues of parenting practices among Caribbean immigrants in North America. In a sample of 118 Caribbean and 136 Filipino parents and adolescents in Canada, Hassan, Rousseau, Measham and Lashley (2008) examined group differences in parental authority, physical punishment, and cultural values using the Attitudes toward Physical Discipline and Family Environment Scales. The results showed that Caribbean and Filipino immigrant parents have similar attitudes towards physical punishment, but first generation Filipino adolescents had higher approval rates of physical punishment than second generation Filipino adolescents. By comparison, the attitudes toward physical punishment did not differ between first generation and second generation Caribbean adolescents suggesting intergenerational stability in approval of physical punishment.

In studying a sample of 1227 White, 929 Black Caribbean, 612 Nigerian/Ghanaian, 468 other African, 492 Indian, and 621 Pakistani/Bangladeshi adolescents aged 11 to 13 years living in the United Kingdom, Maynard and Harding (2010) supported the notion that parental control could predict different levels of psychological adjustment among ethnic minority groups. By assessing parental control and care in relation to adolescent mental health outcomes, they reported that, after controlling for family type and SES level, higher perceived parental control was positively associated with adolescents' psychological difficulty level, but the White group had significantly greater psychological difficulties compared to all other ethnic minorities. Further, higher parental care was negatively associated with adolescents' adjustment level for all groups; compared to White adolescents, Black Caribbean,

Nigerian/ Ghanaian, and Indian adolescents had lower levels of psychological difficulties when perceived parental care was lower.

A study by Roopnarine, Krishnakumar, Metindogan, and Evans (2006) also examined the role of parenting styles, parent-child academic involvement at home, and parent-school interaction on child academic skills and social behaviors among 70 Caribbean parents and their preschool-aged children living in the New York metropolitan area. Fathers' authoritarian parenting was related to decreasing language skills in children, whereas father-school contact was related to increasing academic skills in children. Fathers' authoritative parenting style and father-child academic interaction at home were positively associated with children's social behaviors. Interestingly, mothers' parenting styles were not associated with children's language or quantitative skills.

Taylor, Chatters, Mattis, and Joe (2010) addressed the role of religiosity and spirituality among Caribbean immigrants in the United States. In a sample of 1621 Caribbean Blacks who reported their country of origin as Spanish speaking countries (180), Haiti (298), Jamaica (510), Trinidad-Tobago (170), and other English speaking countries (440), they investigated organizational, non-organizational, and subjective religiosity. Caribbean Blacks reported high levels of subjective religiosity on the importance of religion in childhood (mean: 3.58), the importance of taking children to services (mean: 3.73), the importance of religion in daily life (mean: 3.59), and self-rated religiosity (mean: 3.03, range: 1-4). Caribbean Blacks who immigrated to the United States in the last 11-20 years were more likely to give more importance to religion when they were growing up compared to their US-born counterparts. Immigrants from Haiti

and Spanish-speaking countries were more likely to embrace the importance of taking their children to religious services than Jamaican immigrants.

Taken together, harsh disciplinary practices are commonly used by primary caregivers in Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago to address inappropriate childhood behaviors (Cappa & Khan, 2011). These caregivers also value the role of religious experiences in childrearing. The manner in which these primary modes of parenting among Caribbean immigrants in the United States influence childhood development remains largely unknown. Such data can assist in addressing social service, mental health, and the educational needs of the increasing numbers of Caribbean immigrant families and children in the United States. Accordingly, this study examined the relationships between physical discipline along with parenting styles, and reports of the importance of religion in children's development and childhood social behaviors among Caribbean immigrants in the United States.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by cultural-ecological perspectives rooted in the

Developmental Niche Model (Super & Harkness1986), Parenting frameworks

(Baumrind, 1967; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005), and Acculturation Theory (Berry, 1997).

In other words, these frameworks assisted in framing the research questions, the selection

of measures, and offered a basis for contextualizing the findings within the immigrant

literature on parenting, religiosity, and childhood development in the United States.

The main proposition behind the Developmental Niche Model is that the child

shapes and is shaped by cultural practices (Harkness & Super, 1994). Given the level of

input the family has as the child's first agent of socialization, it is expected that cultural

differences in parenting values and behaviors would impart significant influences in

shaping child characteristics. The model gives equal weight to the child's environment

and caretaker`s belief, attitudes and characteristics. This is significant for this study

because parental ideas and expressions of warmth and control vary a good deal across

cultures (see Putnick et al., 2012; Roopnarine, Yang, Krishnakumar, & Davidson, in

press). In fact, Caribbean parenting practices are often characterized as "a mixture of

authoritarian/punitive control, alternating with indulgence and protectiveness" (Leo-

Rhynie, 1997, p.45) which contradicts the popular parenting framework developed by

Baumrind (1967) discussed in the previous chapter and Rohner's PARTheory (Rohner &

Kahleque, 2005). Both emphasize high warmth and appropriate levels of control (e.g.,

limit setting. offering structure) as optimal for childrearing. The developmental niche

model consists of three components: "the physical and social settings of the child's

everyday life; culturally regulated customs of child care and childrearing; and the

psychology of the caretakers" (Harkness & Super, 1994, p.220). In view of the within context emphasis on socialization goals and practices and that research findings point to differences in meaning of parental practices among immigrants in the United States and other societies (Chao, 2001; Rudy & Grusec, 2001), the Developmental Niche Model assisted in the selection of parenting instruments that consider childrearing values and practices among Caribbean immigrant families in context (Hassan et al., 2008). Studies have demonstrated that caregivers` cultural backgrounds in developed, recently developed, and developing economies help to shape childrearing attitudes and beliefs and socialization practices (Huijbregths, Leseman, & Tavecchio, 2006). But we are far from understanding how these beliefs and practices influence child development outcomes across societies.

In accordance with the view that there are variations in parenting practices across cultural communities and that warmth and control are present in almost all cultures assessed to date (Rohner & Khaleque, 2012), the PAQ was selected to assess parenting styles among Caribbean immigrants in the United States. The scale shows good reliability and validity across cultural groups (e.g.Chinese; Zhou, Liang, Cai, & Chen, 2010; Japanese; Uji, Sakamoto, Adachi, & Kitamura,2013, and Portugese; Ilva, Morgado, & Maroco,2012) and taps into parenting practices that are integral to those identified in major frameworks and theories on parenting (e.g., Baumrind, 1967; Khaleque & Rohner, 2012). Physical control is a dominant feature of socialization practices in Caribbean societies (Leo-Rhynie, 1997; Roopnarine et al., in press, Roopnarine et al., in press). Thus, along with autocratic modes of behaviors assessed by the PAQ, it was deemed necessary to examine severity of punishment as well. There is good evidence on the

frequent use of physical punishment among Caribbean parents (Cappa & Kahn, 2011) and the consequences of physical punishment on childhood development have been determined in some cultural communities (see Gershoff, 2002; Lansford et al., 2005; Mckee et al., 2007). However, the severity of punishment speaks to the degree of harshness of discipline and in conjunction with authoritarian parenting may heighten the influence of inappropriate parenting practices on childhood development.

Religious socialization has been seen as a protective factor in insulating children from harsh parenting and harsh ecological niches (Letiecq, 2007). For this reason, it made theoretical sense to examine parental endorsement of the importance of religion in childhood development. Research on Jamaican families show that belief in religion and church membership increases fathers' involvement with children (Anderson, 2007) and studies on other cultural groups indicate that religiosity had a positive influence on the use of authoritative strategies with children living in violent ecological niches (Carothers et al., 2005). It is likely that the belief in religion enables parents to be more introspective about parenting practices that are harsh and unfair.

Acculturation Theory (Berry, 1997) provides an added dimension to understanding immigrant parenting practices because it focuses on different patterns of adjustment and adaptation to the host culture and sees these processes as non-linear and bi-directional. According to Berry, acculturation is a process of cultural change when two or more cultures associate with each other. The direction of change is determined by how these cultures attempt to live together. Berry proposed four acculturation strategies that have been derived from two essential domains of acculturation attitudes; one's choice of maintaining his/her own heritage culture and identity and one's choice of having contact

with and participating within a dominant culture. Assimilation, takes place when individuals renounce aspects of their own cultural beliefs and practices and incorporate those of the host society (Berry, 1994). Integration occurs when an individual wants to maintain core aspects of their own culture while incorporating beliefs and practices from the host culture, whereas separation occurs when individuals maintain their own culture and avoid interacting with the host society (Berry, 1994). Marginalization occurs when individuals lose interest in maintaining their natal culture beliefs and practices and those of the host culture due to experiences of discrimination or enforced cultural loss (Berry, 1994).

The degree to which Caribbean immigrant parents hold on to the harsh and indulgent parenting practices upon migration is a matter of speculation. The findings are mixed on the impact of acculturation on certain aspects of individual and family functioning. For example, Jamaican immigrant college students in the United States whose families arrived in their 30s, married, and became naturalized citizens showed more acculturative attitudes and tended to lose their family ties, whereas Jamaican immigrant college students who maintained their cultural identity and ethnic loyalty tended to show less acculturative attitudes (Buddington, 2002). First-generation immigrants from English-speaking Caribbean islands living in Canada were able to maintain their ethnic heritage behavior that was not associated with mainstream cultural orientation in Canada-- supporting the notion of bi-dimensional acculturation attitudes (Dere, Ryder, & Kirmayer, 2010). Van Niekerk (2007) suggested that second-generation Caribbean immigrants in the Netherlands showed integration attitudes that differ from first generation Caribbean immigrants who have stronger ethnic identity and behavior in

Dutch society. Another study revealed that Indo-Guyanese immigrant families in the United States displayed more authoritarian parenting practices than their European American counterparts. Although immigrant adjustment was not a focus of this study, it could be that the longer Caribbean families live in the United States and the more they are exposed to democratic parenting practices, they may begin to revise their internal working models about harsher forms of childrearing that may have accompanied them on the immigrant journey. If this occurs, these families are likely to display practices that are closer to the authoritative than authoritarian parenting style which bode well for positive child development outcomes.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

This study explored the relationships between parenting styles, severity of punishment, and parental belief about the importance of religion in child development, and children's social behaviors among Caribbean immigrants in the United States. The questions posed by this study and the accompanying hypotheses are:

1. Are there difference between mothers' and fathers' reports of parenting style, severity of punishment, perception of religion in childhood development, and childhood social behaviors among Caribbean immigrant families?

   Hypothesis 1a.Fathers and mothers parenting styles, severity of punishment and perception of religion in childhood development will not differ (Roopnarine et al., in press).

   Hypothesis 1b.There will be no difference between mothers' and fathers' report of childhood social behaviors (Roopnarine et al., in press).

2. What are the relationships between parenting styles, severity of punishment, parental belief about the importance of religion in child development and children's social behavior among Caribbean immigrant families in the U.S?

   Hypothesis 2.Fathers' and mothers' authoritative parenting, severity of punishment, and parental belief about the importance of religion in child development would be associated with children's social behaviors (Roopnarine et al., 2006). However, whereas authoritative parenting and importance of religion in childhood development will show positive associations with social skills, harsh physical discipline will show an inverse relationship with childhood social skills.

Chapter 3

Methods

Sample

For the purpose of this study, analysis was conducted using data from a study of Caribbean immigrant families in the United States conducted by Roopnarine et al., (2006). The participants for the original study consisted of 70 English-speaking Caribbean immigrant families and their prekindergarten and kindergarten-aged children who resided in New York and New Jersey. Families were recruited through the head of community agencies and organizations, churches, and early childhood centers. They were given a brief description of the study through these agencies. If they indicated a willingness to participate to the heads of the different agencies and schools, they were contacted via telephone or in person to solicit their participation and to further explain the family's role in the study. About 80% of the families contacted agreed to take part in the study.

For these analyses, data were available on 57 Indo Caribbean immigrant couples who immigrated to the United States mainly from Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. The mothers' ages ranged from 24 to 42 years (Mean= 34 years; S.D. =4.87), and the fathers' ages ranged from 24 to 48 years (Mean= 36 years; S.D. =4.68). In terms of education, 3 % of mothers and 14 % of fathers were college graduates, 14 % of mothers and fathers had completed some college, 44 % of mothers and 24 % of fathers were high school graduates, and 47 % of mothers and 38 % of fathers were less than high school graduates. The average length of stay in the United States for mothers was 13.77 years (S.D. = 6.13, (range 2-35 years) and for fathers was 12.04 years (S.D. = 5.18 (range 1-25 years). Eighty- two percent of parents were married (mean=10.29, S.D. = 3.93). Eighty-four

percent of fathers and 77 % of mothers worked fulltime outside of the home. Most of the families were employed in semi-skilled jobs (e.g., office clerks, mechanics, supervisors, maintenance workers, and office managers).

The average age of the target children was 5.06 years old (S.D. =.73; range 3.33 - 6.67); 33 were boys and 24 were girls. At the time of the study, all children were enrolled in early childhood programs such as Head Start, Community Preschool Programs, Universal Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Programs, University preschools, or Church-based programs. Most children attended the programs fulltime. The programs reflected diverse philosophical and educational approaches to educating young children.
Parental Assessments

Data gathered via a sociodemographic questionnaire, the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991), Childhood Social Skills Scale (Stevenson & Lee, 1991), and two Likert-type questions about religion and physical punishment were used in this thesis.

Sociodemographic Questionnaire: The sociodemographic questionnaire consisted of items that asked for information on parental education, parent`s age, annual income, number of people in the household, number and birth order of children in family, marital status, length of stay in the United States, how children were enrolled in preschool, educational philosophy of preschools, and teacher-child ratios in the early childhood classrooms.

Parental Behaviors

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ): Mothers and fathers completed the

Parental Authority Questionnaire that consists of 30 items that assessed authoritarian,

authoritative, and permissive parenting styles (Buri, 1971). The instrument was

developed based on Baumrind's (1971) parenting typology. Parents rated the perceptions

of each behavioral item on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) strongly

disagree to (5) strongly agree. According to previous studies (Buri, 1971), the PAQ has

been validated with 61 parents. Factor analyses indicated the presence of three factors

and the alpha coefficients for maternal authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive scales

were .77, .78, and .81, and paternal authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive scales

were .92, .85, .77, respectively.

In this study, exploratory factor analysis was conducted for fathers' and mothers'

responses on the PAQ separately. Principal component extraction was used followed by

Varimax Rotation. Results from Bartlett's test of Sphericity indicated that the correlation

matrix for items on fathers' and mothers' parenting was not random (χ^2= 803.575;

df=435; p<.001 for fathers; χ^2= 704.824; df=435; p<.001 for mothers Are these degrees

of freedom correct?). Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many

coefficients of .4 and above. The Kaiser Meyer-Olkin value was .578 for fathers, and was

.523 for mothers, both of which are less than the suggested .6 value (Tabachnik & Fidell,

2001). But Bartlett's test of Sphericity reached statistical significance, supporting the

factorability of the correlation matrix. Items that load below.40 and lower than a .20

difference between primary and secondary loadings were dropped. Following these

criteria, the scale proved useful for fathers and mothers. Six items loaded on the

authoritarian subscale, 5 items loaded on the authoritative subscale, and 4 items loaded on the permissive subscale. In this study, the standardized Cronbach's coefficients on the PAQ for fathers: authoritative= .79, authoritarian= .73, and permissive =.51, and for mothers: authoritative=.65; authoritarian=.73, and permissive=.59, respectively (see Table 4).

Table1: Factor Loadings for PAQ Authoritarian Subscale Items across Mothers and Fathers

Items	Mothers	Fathers
Even if my children do not agree with me, I feel that it is for their own good if they are forced to conform to what I think is right	.551	.476
Whenever I ask my children to do something, I expect them to do it immediately without asking any questions	.660	.546
I do not allow my children to question any decision I have made	.559	.592
I have always felt that more force should obey rules of behavior simply because someone in authority has established them	.561	.709
I feel that wise parents should teach their children early just who is the boss in the family	.539	.666
I get very upset if my children disagree with me	.569	.523

Table 2: Factor Loadings for PAQ Authoritative Subscale Items across Mothers and Fathers

Items	Mothers	Fathers
I know what I expect of my children in the family, but I also let my children know that they are free to discuss those expectations with me when they feel they are unreasonable	.710	.689
I have clear standards of behavior for the children in our home, but I am willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family	.425	.727
I give my children directions for their behavior and activities and expect them to follow the directions, but I am always willing to listen to their concerns and to discuss those directions with them	.740	.683
I give my children clear direction for their behaviors and activities, but I am also understanding when they are disagree with me	.645	.597
If I make a decision in the family that hurts my children, I am willing to discuss that decision with them and to admit if I made a mistake	.442	.714

Table 3: Factor Loadings for PAQ Permissive Subscale Items across Mothers and Fathers

Items	Mothers	Fathers
I have always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do even if this does not agree with what their parents might want	.782	.667
I do not believe that children should obey rules of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them	.580	.412
I felt that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions and desires as they are growing up	.491	.586
I allow my children to form their own point of view on family matters and generally allow them to decide for themselves what they are going to do	.497	.530

Severity of Punishment Scale: Mothers and fathers were each asked to answer a single open-ended question to refer to the type of physical discipline they used on their children. The question was "What is the most common method of discipline you use with your child?" Their answers were categorized ordinally along four dimensions of severity from (1) least severe (talking with child about behavior, explaining to child, reasoning with child) to 4 very severe (hitting, spanking child). Mothers and fathers did not differ in the severity of punishment employed with children (Mothers' report: M=2.50, S.D.=1.05; Fathers' report: M=2.49, S.D.=1.24).

Role of Religiosity/Spirituality: Mothers and fathers were asked to answer a single question to determine the importance of religion in children's lives ("How important are religious/spiritual experiences in influencing children's overall development?"). Although religiosity and spirituality have been defined and studied separately, they have a common conceptual base (Holden & Vittrup, 2009). Hence, the question was framed broadly. The item was rated on an 8-point Likert-type scale from very important (8) to not very important (1). (Mothers' report; M= 6.85, S.D. =1.69: Fathers' report: M=6.80, S.D. = 1.70).

Children Social Behaviors: Mothers and fathers were asked to assess their children's social behaviors using a scale that was created for a cross-national comparison of childhood social and academic skills (Stevenson & Lee, 1991). The scale was modified for use in this study. It was made up of 5 items that focused on childhood obedience, good social skills, curious about things, displays good self-confidence, and persistence that are measured on 5 point Likert-type scale from (5) almost always to (1) not at all. It asks parents to assess their children's skills in everyday settings. Examples of items are; "My child is obedient", "My child displays good social skills", and "My child usually shows persistence when working on a task." A factor analysis showed that all 5 items loaded above .40 to form a unidimensional scale. The Cronbach's alpha for fathers was .642, and for mothers was .666.

Plan of Analysis

First, a Pearson correlation was computed to determine the associations among socio-demographic characteristics, parenting styles, parental religious orientation, parental physical discipline and children's social behaviors. Based on the correlation coefficients obtained, control variables were selected to be included in multiple regression analyses. The results from the correlation matrix showed that the relationships between maternal parenting, maternal perception of the importance of religious in childhood development, maternal assessment of severity of punishment, maternal demographic variables and children's social behaviors were not significant. Therefore, the maternal factors were not included in any of the regression analyses.

Second, paired sample t-tests were conducted to determine the difference between maternal parenting and paternal parenting variables. Then, independent sample t-tests were used to examine the differences between boys' and girls' social skills.

Next, a multiple regression model was used to analyze the relationship between the independent variables: (1) parenting variables, (2) parental perception of the importance of religion in childhood development), (3) severity of punishment, and the dependent variable-- children's social behaviors.

Chapter 4

Results

Relationship between Variables

Table 4 presents the correlation coefficients for the relationships between the sociodemographic variables, paternal and maternal measures, and composite measure of childhood social behaviors. As can be seen from this table, mothers' education was negatively correlated with mothers' authoritarian parenting ($r=-.432$, $p<.01$), and was positively correlated with mothers' permissive parenting ($r=.262$, $p<.05$). Mothers' reports of the importance of religion in childhood development was positively associated with mothers' report of children's social behaviors ($r=.374$, $p<.01$). Fathers' reports of the importance of religion in childhood development was positively associated with fathers' age ($r=.331$, $p<.05$) and gender of child ($r=.308$, $p<.05$). Fathers' education was negatively correlated with fathers' authoritarian parenting ($r=-.450$, $p<.01$), and fathers' authoritative parenting ($r=-.263$, $p<.05$). Fathers' authoritative parenting was negatively correlated with fathers' reports of severity of punishment ($r=-.351$, $p<.01$), and positively associated with fathers' reports of children's social behaviors ($r=.374$, $p<.01$). Fathers' reports of the importance of religion in childhood development was positively correlated with fathers' reports of children' social behaviors ($r=.408$, $p<.01$) and child age ($r=.281$, $p<.05$).

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for All Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. C Age	1.000								
2. C Gender	-.024	1.000							
3. M Age	.068	.047	1.000						
4. M EDU	-.060	-.021	.080	1.000					
5. M AR	-.005	-.016	.122	-.432**	1.000				
6. M AT	.077	-.002	.036	-.128	.149	1.000			
7. M PER	.242	-.047	.151	.262*	-.110	.121	1.000		
8. M RD	.236	.156	.076	-.247	-.107	-.105	.047	1.000	
9. M SOP	.094	.027	-.062	-.003	.063	.124	.051	-.049	1.000
10. F Age	.094	.107	.647**	.009	-.007	-.087	.093	.182	-.014
11. F EDU	-.041	-.084	.160	.272*	-.235	-.102	.098	-.021	.029
12. F AR	-.244	.179	-.024	-.222	.099	-.099	-.186	-.067	-.289*
13. F AT	-.055	.177	-.230	-.173	.090	-.180	-.311*	.295*	.074
14. F PER	-.079	.112	.077	.004	.019	.189	-.131	.041	-.012
15. F RD	-.014	.308*	.136	-.016	-.045	-.012	.097	.299*	-.074
16. F SOP	.107	.093	.155	.017	-.134	.203	.092	.042	.311*
17.M C SB	.141	.004	.074	-.237	.206	.154	.162	.374**	.085
18. F C SB	.281	.066	-.113	-.285*	.076	.121	-.04	.306**	.197

Variable	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.
10. F Age	1.000								
11. F EDU	.225	1.000							
12. F AR	-.160	-.450*	1.000						
13. F AT	-.158	-.263	.107	1.000					
14. F PER	.062	.088	.120	.255	1.000				
15. F RD	.331*	.088	-.090	.334*	.184	1.000			
16. F SOP	.077	-.079	-.128	-.351**	-.152	-.224	1.000		
17.M C SB	.022	-.193	-.056	.030	-.032	.210	.117	1.000	
18. F C SB	-.059	-.180	-.056	.347**	.148	.408**	.057	.359**	1.000

C: Child, M: Mother, F: Father, EDU: Education, AR: Authoritarian parenting, AT: Authoritative parenting, PER: Permissive parenting, RD: Importance of religion development, SOP: Severity of punishment, SB: Childhood Social Behavior

Differences in Parenting Style and Practices

To test differences between mothers' and fathers' parenting styles and practices, a series of paired-sample t-tests were conducted. Table 6 displays the means and the standard deviations for Caribbean immigrant mothers' and fathers' authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles, importance of religion in childhood development, and severity of punishment. There were no significant differences between mothers' and fathers' parenting styles and practices (see Table 5).

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations for Parenting Style and Practices for Mothers and Fathers

	Mothers	Fathers	
	Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)	t-value
Authoritarian Parenting	19.56 (5.56)	18.78 (5.62)	.776
Authoritative Parenting	21.84 (3.22)	21.94 (3.30)	-.159
Permissive Parenting	10.57 (3.71)	11.12 (3.55)	-.751
Severity of Punishment	2.50 (1.05)	2.49 (1.24)	.098
Importance of Religion	6.85 (1.69)	6.80 (1.70)	.197

Differences in Childhood Social Behaviors

An independent sample t-test was used to assess differences between parents'
assessments of boys' and girls' childhood social behaviors. There was no significant
difference between boys' and girls' childhood social behaviors based on mothers' or
fathers' reports (see Table 6).

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviations for Childhood Social Behaviors for Boys and
Girls

	Boys	Girls	
	Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)	t-value
Mother report of childhood social behaviors	22.06 (2.73)	22.08 (2.39)	-.033
Father report of childhood social behaviors	22.15 (2.01)	22.45 (2.70)	-.491

Relationship between Parenting Style, Practices and Childhood Social Behaviors

A series of multiple regression models was used to examine the relationship
between parental variables and childhood outcomes. As stated previously, based on the
correlation coefficients (see Table 5) only paternal variables were used in the regression
model because of the low correlation coefficients obtained between maternal variables
and childhood social behaviors. In the regression model, paternal parenting styles,
parental importance of religion in childhood development and paternal severity of

punishment were entered as independent variables and child social behaviors was entered as the dependent variable. Each paternal parenting style was entered separately with the other independent variables. Because of multicollinearity between the demographic variables and independent variables, the demographic variables were not included in the regression model so as to eliminate bias in the findings.

Authoritarian Parenting, Severity of Punishment, Importance of Religion in Childhood Development and Children's Social Behaviors

Table 7 presents the multiple regression analysis of the associations between fathers' authoritarian parenting, fathers' severity of punishment, fathers' perceptions of the importance of religion in childhood development and children's social behaviors. The overall model was significant $F (3, 53) = 4.133$; p. < 0.05; $R^2 = .190$ indicating that paternal authoritarian parenting, severity of punishment, and the importance of religion in childhood development accounted for 19% of the variance in child social behaviors. In the model, the importance of religion in children's development was significant ($\beta = .443$, $p<.01$), but authoritarian parenting ($\beta = .004$) and the severity of punishment ($\beta = .157$) did not reach conventional statistical significance levels in the model.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Using Authoritarian Parenting, Severity of Punishment, and the Importance of Religion Development to Predict Child Social Behavior

Variable	b	SE	β	T	F	R^2
Model					4.133	.190
Authoritarian parenting	.002	.052	.004	.034		
Severity of punishment	.292	.239	.157	1.222		
Religion development	.601	.173	.443**	3.468		

**p<.01

Authoritative Parenting, Severity of Punishment, Importance of Religion in Childhood Development and Children's Social Behaviors

Table 8 presents the multiple regression model for the associations between fathers' authoritative parenting, fathers' severity of punishment, fathers' perceptions of the importance of religion in childhood development, and children's social behaviors. The overall model was significant $F (3, 53) =7.108$; p. < 0.01; $R^2= .287$ indicating that these variables accounted for 28 % of the variance in children's social behaviors. In the model, three of the predictor variables were significant with the importance of religion in childhood development recording a higher beta value ($β=.350, p<.01$) than authoritative parenting ($β=.347, p<.05$) and severity of punishment ($β=.257, p<.05$).

Table 8: Multiple Regression Using Authoritative Parenting, Severity of Punishment, and the Importance of Religion Development to Predict Child Social Behavior

	b	SE	β	t	F	R^2
Model					7.108	.287
Authoritative parenting	.243	.090	.347*	2.690		
Severity of punishment	.479	.233	.257*	2.060		
Religion development	.474	.168	.350**	2.819		

*p<.05, **p<.01

Permissive Parenting, Severity of Punishment, Importance of Religion in Childhood Development and Children's Social Behaviors

Table 9 demonstrates the multiple regression model for the associations between fathers' permissive parenting, fathers' severity of punishment, fathers' perceptions of the importance of religion in childhood development, and children's social behaviors. The overall model was significant $F_{(3, 53)} = 4.364$; p. < 0.01; $R^2 = .198$ indicating that these variables accounted for 20% of the variance in childhood social behaviors. In the model, the importance of religion in children's development was significant ($\beta = .428$, p<.01), but permissive parenting ($\beta = .095$) and the severity of punishment ($\beta = .167$) did not reach statistical significance in the model.

Table 9: Multiple Regression Using Permissive Parenting, Severity of Punishment, and the Importance of Religion Development to Predict Child Social Behavior

	b	SE	β	t	F	R^2
Model					4.364	.198
Permissive parenting	.062	.082	.095	.751		
Severity of punishment	.312	.237	.167	1.316		
Religion development	.580	.173	.428**	3.350		

**p<.01

Chapter 5

Discussion

Using cultural-ecological frameworks (Super & Harkness, 1997), propositions within well-established parenting theories (Baumrind, 1967; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005), and an immigrant adjustment theory (Berry, 1994), the primary goal of this study was to further examine the associations between parenting styles and practices and childhood outcomes. Specifically, the relationship between paternal and maternal parenting styles, severity of punishment, parental beliefs about the importance of religion in childhood development and children's social behaviors were assessed among English-speaking Caribbean immigrant families living in the United States. Although mothers and fathers did not differ in their reports of parenting styles, severity of punishment, and the importance of religion in child development, the degree and nature of relationships between these variables and children's social behaviors differed by gender-of parent. Because zero-order correlations indicated weak relationships between maternal assessments of parenting styles and practices and children's social skills, the maternal variables were not explored in the regression analyses. Thus, I will discuss more fully the findings that form the crux of this study, those pertaining to Caribbean immigrant fathers.

It is noteworthy that there were no significant differences between mothers' and fathers' assessments of parenting styles. These findings suggest that Caribbean immigrant mothers and fathers approach emotional caregiving somewhat similarly in that they were equally as likely to use authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles of parenting during childrearing in the United States. Nor were there differences in mothers' and fathers' assessments of their use of physical punishment or their perceptions of the

importance of religion in childhood development. This contradicts the general assumption that Caribbean men are distant from children's emotional lives and support recent results from a study in Trinidad and Tobago that suggests that men display the same levels of warmth to preschool-aged children as mothers (Roopnarine et al., in press).

Analyses revealed that the hypothesis was confirmed for fathers. That is, fathers' authoritative parenting style, severity of punishment, and parental perceptions of the importance of religion in child development predicted children's social behaviors. These data suggest that as fathers used more authoritative parenting and had more positive views about the importance of religion in child development, their assessments of children's social behaviors were more favorable. According to parenting frameworks, these associations lend support to the thesis that warm, responsive caregiving has positive influences on childhood development across most cultural groups (see Sorkhabi, 2005; Khaleque, & Rohner, 2012) and contradicts findings on Chinese immigrants in the United States that the authoritative style of parenting benefits European American children moreso than other ethnic groups (e.g., Chao, 1991). Because parental warmth and responsiveness has been observed in most cultures, it may be that its unique benefits to childhood development do not vary much (see Khaleque & Rohner, 2012 for a meta-analysis on 66 studies across 22 countries). Furthermore, given that this pattern held for Caribbean immigrants in the United States, a group that immigrated from cultures that display a mixture of warm and harsh parenting practices points to the stability of authoritative parenting for optimal childhood development across cultural settings (see Rohner & Khaleque, 2012; Sorkhabi, 2005).

The association between fathers' authoritative parenting and children's social behaviors such as obedience, confidence, curiosity, persistence and good social skills provides insights into the importance of immigrant fathers' role in enhancing childhood development in the United States. While Caribbean mothers play a significant role in childrearing-- sometimes referred to as "fathering children"--Caribbean fathers' qualitative involvement in childrearing is undeniable (Roopnarine et al.,2006; Roopnarine, 2013). The associations between paternal democratic involvement and social behaviors extend the work of others (Barrow, 2008; Dubrow, 1999; Wilson et al., 2003) who have described the childrearing emphasis on manners and respect for others as desirable childhood behaviors that are used in guiding young Caribbean children. At the same time, these data challenge the position taken by some researchers (e.g., Brown & Chevannes, 1998) that fathers are mainly responsible for disciplining children. As Roopnarine (2013) emphasized Caribbean fathers are considered as the head of household and carry traditional values, but they also engage in varying levels of caregiving activities and play with children.

Perception of religion in childhood development is gaining greater attention as a factor that mitigates against harsh economic and social conditions that are known to influence childrearing practices in negative ways (see Letiecq, 2007). In the present study, perception of the importance of religion in childhood development showed a strong association with children's social behaviors. The magnitude of relationship between the view of religion in child development and children's social behaviors was stronger than those between authoritative or authoritarian parenting and children's social behaviors in the regression models tested. As in earlier work by King (2003) who posited

that religious fathers tend to have more traditional family attitudes, perceive religion as an important component of child development, and are more involved with their children, these data also provide evidence of a link between fathers' perceptions of the importance of religion and children's social behaviors. Given that parental religious beliefs are positively associated with child emotional development (Cole, Bruschi, & Tamang, 2002) and parent-child relationship (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000), these results demonstrate the possible role of religion in father-child relationship. It appears that religion is an important aspect of childrearing in the Caribbean and among Caribbean immigrants in the United States. Caribbean immigrants in the United States tend to give more importance to religion in childhood development compared to adults of Caribbean ancestry born in the United States (Taylor, Chatters, Mattis, & Joe, 2010). Anderson (2007) also found religion, as measured by church affiliation and attendance, to be associated with higher levels of paternal involvement with children in Jamaican families. Similarly, Letiecq (2007) found that religious fathers were more likely to employ positive parenting strategies consistent with the authoritative parenting style.

By contrast, severity of punishment was associated with decreasing levels of engagement in authoritative parenting and lower perceptions of the role of religion in childhood development. In other words, as harsh parenting increased its negative consequences were noted in both the expression of warmth and responsiveness and belief in the role of religion in children's development. Interestingly, harsh punishment was not related to children's social behaviors when it was entered in the regression models with authoritarian or permissive parenting. However, when entered in the equation with authoritative parenting, physical punishment had a negative association with childhood

social behaviors. The relationships between physical punishment and a range of childhood outcomes (e.g., compliance, aggression, antisocial behavior, and delinquent behavior) were delineated in a meta-analysis by Gershoff (2002). Similar associations have been discerned for samples in Jamaica (Steely & Rohner, 2006), Guyana (Roopnarine et al., 2013), and St. Kitts (Rohner et al., 1991) and in some cases it had a direct relationship.

The association between physical punishment and children's behaviors in this study is of particular importance in view of the fact that the use of physical punishment was much lower among Caribbean immigrants in the United States than in the Caribbean. Cappa and Khan (2011) argued that Caribbean parents commonly use harsh, punitive disciplinary methods to control undesirable child behavior. In their cross-national study, 90 % of Jamaican mothers, 82% of Guyanese mothers, and 74% of mothers from Trinidad and Tobago approved of physical punishment as a disciplinary method, and their children were subjected to different modes of physical punishment (Cappa & Khan, 2011). In this study, 14% of fathers and 9% of mothers talked with children about their behavior, explaining and reasoning with the child; 41% of fathers and 44% of mothers withdrew privileges, took toys away, used time out or sent children to their room; 7% of fathers and 21% of mothers raised their voice and spanked gently. Only 23% of mothers and 33% of fathers reported that they occasionally spanked or hit their child. Considering Caribbean immigrant parents' educational attainment, marital and immigration status, and the legal protection offered children in the United States, it might be expected that these parents would employ less punitive disciplinary techniques with children compared to parents from the natal countries. In the absence of comparative data, not much can be

inferred from the diverse disciplinary strategies. It should be mentioned, though, that with lower use of physical punishment among fathers in these families, the negative association between harsh treatment and children's social behaviors was still evident.

Why the significant associations between paternal practices and beliefs and childhood outcomes but not maternal beliefs and practices and childhood outcomes? There are plausible interpretations of the lack of associations between maternal practices and childhood behaviors tied to sample size and the low reliability obtained on the parenting measure. Mothers could be interpreting the items on the parenting scale differently than fathers. However, there may be other reasons for the lack of association between maternal practices and beliefs and childhood behaviors. One speculation is that the families in study are from very conservative backgrounds where there is the likelihood of traditional division of childcare responsibility and household labor within the family (see Roopnarine, Krishnakumar, & Xu, 2009). Typically, in these families mothers defer to the father's authority in childrearing. From an acculturation perspective, during the immigrant adjustment process, traditional families may rely more on the fathers' guidance in matters of childrearing and household functioning. Hence the father's role may become more central to childhood socialization and development. These issues need to be explored more fully in a diverse sample of families controlling for belief systems.

Limitations

Although the findings from this study are informative on different fronts, they have several limitations and should be interpreted with caution. Besides being exploratory in nature, the small sample size prevents the generalizability of findings. The sample consisted of Indo Caribbean immigrants only. Other studies may want to include a larger and more diverse sample of Caribbean immigrants from different generations to assess the possible impact of acculturation on parenting practices and childhood outcomes. In this study, length of stay in the United States was used as a proxy for immigrant adjustment. Clearly, this index does not consider psycho-social or socio-cultural changes in immigrant adjustment. Additionally, data were gathered from self-reports. Because of the shared variance between parenting style, parental perception of religion in child development, and demographic variables, none of the demographic variables were included in the analysis to estimate unbiased results. It would have been more beneficial to gather data via observations and interviews and through multiple informants as well. Finally, the use of a single-item to assess parental beliefs about religion in child training may not tap into the diverse dimensions of religiosity and likely presents an incomplete picture of the importance of religion in parenting and childhood development. The same could be said for the assessment of physical punishment.

Conclusion and Implications

Overall, this study sheds some light on the role of fathers in childrearing among Caribbean immigrant families in United States. Fathers' authoritative parenting style along with their perception of religion in childhood development were positively linked

with 3- to 6- years old children social behaviors. Findings also confirm the negative role of physical punishment when used in conjunction with the authoritative style of parenting on childhood social behaviors. In documenting links between immigrant Caribbean fathers' parenting styles and the importance of religion in children's development and children's social behavior, this study indicates a need to further examine the association between parenting styles and practices and children's development among Caribbean immigrant families in United States.

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